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Forest Practices Board

2006/07 – 2008/09
SERVICE PLAN

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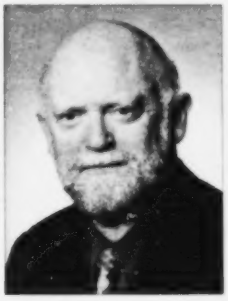

Message from the Chair and Accountability Statement

This annual service plan is prepared by the Forest Practices Board for presentation to the B.C. Legislature under the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*.

The plan outlines the results the Board expects to achieve in the three-year period from 2006/07 through 2008/09 with the funds voted to it by the Legislature, providing the basis for accountability and assessment of the Board's performance.

The service plan also provides a strategic context that guides the Board's current activities. Looking to the future, we continue to refine our strategic objectives, the linkages to our business areas, and the performance measures by which the Legislature and the public will be able to track our progress over time.

It is the Board's intent to continue the delivery of its mandate through its audit, investigation, review and appeal, and reporting functions, while adapting to meet the challenges of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*.

The 2006/07 - 2008/09 Forest Practices Board Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of February 1, 2006 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.

Bruce Fraser, Ph.D.
Chair

February 1, 2006

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Board Overview

Purpose of the Board

The Forest Practices Board was created under the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (the Code) as an independent watchdog for sound forest practices in B.C.'s public forests. The mandate of the Forest Practices Board is to provide independent assurance, to both the British Columbia public and the international marketplace, that forest and range licensees are carrying out sound practices and complying with legal requirements. Its mandate is also to ensure that resource ministries are appropriately monitoring and enforcing legislation.

The Board's mandate continues under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA), which enables the Board to focus on the effectiveness of forest practices in achieving objectives, legislated by government, for forest resource values.

The Board audits tenure holders and government ministries for compliance with and enforcement of the Code and the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA); carries out special investigations and issues reports as appropriate; investigates concerns and complaints from the public; and participates in appeals to the Forest Appeals Commission.

Legislation ensures Board independence from licensees and government. While the Board submits reports to the Ministers of Forests and Range (MOFR), Environment, Agriculture and Lands, and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, its reports are not provided to government for revision or comment in advance of public release. When the Board deals with an audit of or complaint about a government agency, that agency receives the same level of information about the Board's preliminary findings as any other auditee or complaint subject.

The Board's funding is determined directly by Treasury Board, and is distinct from the MOFR budget.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Forests that are soundly managed to sustain the full range of forest values and forest resources for British Columbians.

Mission

The Board serves the public interest as the independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices in British Columbia.

Values

The Board:

- acts on behalf of the public's interest, not those of any single group;
- is straightforward in its approach;
- emphasizes solutions over assigning blame;
- behaves in a non-adversarial, balanced manner;
- treats all people with respect, fairness and sensitivity;
- performs in a measured, unbiased and non-partisan manner;
- carries out its mandate with integrity and efficiency;
- provides clear and concise reports to the public;
- bases actions and decisions on knowledge, experience and common sense; and
- is accessible and accountable.

Strategic Context

The Board remains objective and independent from industry, environmental groups and government. Board members have diverse background and experience, allowing the Board to fairly represent the public interest. The expertise of the Board and its staff is recognized by stakeholders, and it has well-defined processes for audits and investigation.

The Forest Practices Board is committed to informing the public about forest and range practices through its independent auditor, complaint response, and special investigation roles. It is also mindful that this function is important for positioning BC forest products in the international market. The Board's capacity to fulfil these important and constructive roles is being affected by a changing environment as follows:

Mountain Pine Beetle

Government has substantially increased the allowable annual cut, on the order of 5 million cubic metres, to respond to the mountain pine beetle epidemic. This vastly expanded harvest increases the number and scope of operations that need to be audited, particularly the extensive salvage operations now in process. There are major public questions about reforestation, conservation of a broad range of non-timber forest resources, management of watersheds, and design of a more resilient forest for the future. These issues are of intense public interest and a major focus of the Board.

Forest Fires

Forest fuel accumulation, from both beetle-killed timber and ongoing fire suppression, has led to increased forest fire risk, particularly for communities in the wildland/urban interface. The impact of forest practices on fuel accumulation remains a focus of public concern. The issue extends to reforestation, managing fuels through controlled burning, and conserving biodiversity by managing fire frequency in natural and plantation forests.

New Licensees

The reallocation of timber under the Forest Revitalization Program is introducing an increased number of First Nations, small business and community operators with limited professional forest management experience. Forest practices by these newer operators are subject to the same rules and public expectations as for the more experienced operators. Board audits and investigations will need to place increased emphasis on these new licensees.

Threatened Species

A recurring theme of public concern is the conservation or recovery of threatened species. The Board is frequently called upon to investigate the effects of forest practices on wildlife habitat. This concern is growing and the Board is increasing its effort to look at these issues.

Forest and Range Practices Act

Forest practices legislation has shifted emphasis from compliance with prescriptive rules, to implementation of strategies for resource value objectives specified by government. This change requires extensive revision of audit and investigation systems, to recognize the move toward objectives-based legislation.

Third-Party Certification

The forest industry in British Columbia is being challenged to adopt one or more of the major forest certifications schemes. This is influencing the evolution of forest company practices. The schemes are competitive and make varying claims to the marketplace about sustainability, public consultation and First Nations sensitivity. Some licensees pursuing third-party certification are now entering into private agreements with interest groups, outside of public planning processes, to decide where and how forest practices will occur.

The implications for achieving the government's objectives are uncertain. The public needs independent assurance that certified licensees are effective in maintaining environmental values and achieving government objectives.

Core Business Areas

The Board's core business areas are:

Conducting and publishing independent public reports on audits and special investigations

The Board provides the public with objective information about the state of forest and range practices, validates sound practices and recommends improvements based upon direct field observation, consultation and research.

Conducting complaint investigations and administrative appeals

The Board provides a venue to address public complaints and concerns regarding forest practices.

Core business areas arise from the Board's legislated mandate. With regard to forest and range planning and practices, FRPA states that the Board:

- must carry out periodic independent audits to determine compliance and the appropriateness of government enforcement;
- may carry out special investigations;
- may make a special report and comment publicly;
- must deal with complaints from the public; and
- may undertake appeals.

Functions are performed by professional staff and contractors under the guidance of an independent Board.

Resource Summary

Core Business Areas	2005/06 Restated Estimates[1]	2006/07 Estimates	2007/08 Plan	2008/09 Plan
Operating Expenses ($000)				
Forest Practices Board	3,607	3,637	3,637	3,637
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)				
Forest Practices Board	27	27	27	27
Board Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) ($000)				
Total	100	125	125	125

[1] These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with the presentation of the 2006/07 *Estimates*. Schedule A of the *Estimates* presents a detailed reconciliation.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

Overview

Board Overall Goal

The Board's independent watchdog function will promote the continuous improvement and application of sound forest and range practices to achieve the sustainable management of the public resources of British Columbia.

Management and conservation objectives set by government provide the framework for assessing sustainability of forest and range practices.

Linkage to the Five Great Goals

"Lead the world in sustainable environmental management..."

The Board provides credible, objective and independent verification of sustainable industry and government forest and range practices. Board audits and investigations are objective, thorough, field-based and are extensively checked before reports are published. While the Board occasionally finds it necessary to report on inadequate practices, its approach is to recommend improvements to forest and range practices and government enforcement, consistent with industry's continuing efforts to adapt and improve.

Cross Ministry Initiatives

The Board is working in cooperation with the FRPA Resource Evaluation Program (FREP) to develop means for assessing the effectiveness of forest practices. FRPA is intended to be results-based legislation. This means that government sets outcomes it wants to achieve — in the form of government objectives — and leaves it to forest companies and licensed professionals to decide how best to achieve them. Consequently, the Board is continuing to test effectiveness audits to test if government's objectives are being achieved.

While FREP and the Board will both evaluate the effectiveness of forest practices, they will do so for fundamentally different purposes. FREP's intent is provincial-level monitoring, to identify trends over time and assess the state of the forest. The Board's intent is to provide a "snapshot" that looks at the effectiveness of a licensee's forest practices at a specific place and time.

Performance Plan

Goal 1: *Contribute to continuous improvement in forest and range practices.*

Objective: ***Forest and range licensees and government agencies are achieving sustainable management of the full spectrum of resources identified in the* Forest and Range Practices Act.**

The objective includes:

- legislation effective in fostering sustainable forest practices;
- forest and range licensees developing and continuously improving practices to achieve the resource objectives set by government; and
- regulatory agencies fostering continuous improvement of forest and range practices through their compliance, enforcement and evaluation programs.

Strategies:

- Conduct random audits of forest and range licensees to assess compliance with FRPA;
- Conduct random audits to assess the appropriateness of government enforcement;
- Develop the Board's capacity to assess the effectiveness of forest practices in achieving objectives set by government;
- Increase audit focus on First Nations, Small Business and Community operators with less professional forestry management experience;
- Consider information arising from third-party forest certification to increase the efficiency of audit procedures;
- Monitor and assess whether regulatory agencies and licensees have adequately implemented audit recommendations for improved practices, following up as necessary to ensure responses are adequate;
- Publish an annual report summarizing audit trends, recommendations and results;
- Monitor administrative penalties and appeals to identify those that address fundamental forest and range practice issues, or involve interpretation of important provisions of legislation;
- Initiate or participate in administrative appeals when the Board believes that doing so is in the public interest;
- Monitor whether Board interventions in appeals and penalties are effective in upholding standards of performance expected of license holders; and
- Publish summaries of the results of appeals.

Performance Measures

Performance Measures	2005/06 Baseline	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
Proportion of recommendations from published audit reports that will be monitored to assess adequacy of implementation	100%	100%	100%	100%
Proportion of administrative penalties and appeals that will be systematically reviewed	100 per cent of those made available to the Board	100 per cent of those made available to the Board	100 per cent of those made available to the Board	100 per cent of those made available to the Board

Goal 2: *Provide members of the public with a fair and effective means to bring forward their concerns about forest and range practices.*

Objective: ***Members of the public are satisfied that forest and range practices in British Columbia are in accordance with the law, being continuously improved and are ultimately sustainable.***

Strategies:

- Deal with all participants in a transparent and non-adversarial manner during complaint investigations.
- Seek informal opportunities to resolve complaints where possible.
- Focus complaint investigations to first address issues directly raised by, and relevant to, the complainant, and second address underlying or thematic issues of public interest.
- Provide parties that are adversely affected by investigation findings with an opportunity to respond, before the report is finalized.
- Improve complaint investigation processes through surveys of participant satisfaction.
- Monitor and assess whether regulatory agencies and licensees have adequately implemented recommendations for improved practices, following up as necessary to ensure responses are adequate.

Performance Measure

Performance Measures	2005/06 Baseline	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
Proportion of participants that will be provided an opportunity to comment on the fairness, objectivity and relevance of complaint investigations	100%	100%	100%	100%
Proportion of recommendations from complaint investigations that will be monitored to assess adequacy of implementation	100%	100%	100%	100%

Goal 3: *Provide the public with independent, objective analysis of forest and range practice issues of high significance for public confidence in the management of B.C.'s public forests.*

Objective: ***Government, regulatory agencies and forest and range licensees address important practices issues affecting the sustainability of forest and range values.***

Strategies:

- Assess prevailing trends and conditions to annually identify issues of major public importance.
- Regularly discuss strategic issues with the heads of regulatory agencies, industry licensees, researchers and interested non-government organizations to determine those worthy of investigation.
- Conduct and publish special investigations where appropriate, which may include recommendations for improving forest practices.
- Monitor and assess whether regulatory agencies and licensees have adequately implemented recommendations for improved practices, following up as necessary to ensure responses are adequate.

Performance Measure

Performance Measures	2005/06 Baseline	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
Proportion of recommendations from published special investigation reports that will be monitored to assess adequacy of implementation	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of special investigations completed and published that deal with issues of major public importance	3	3	3	3

Board Performance Plan Summary

Five Great Goals

Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.

Board Mission

The Board serves the public interest as the independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices in British Columbia.

Board Goals	Board Objectives	Performance Measures
1. Contribute to continuous improvement in forest and range practices.	1 Sustainable management of the full spectrum of resources identified in FRPA.	• Proportion of audit recommendations monitored to assess implementation. • Proportion of administrative penalties and appeals reviewed.
2. Provide the public with a fair and effective means to bring forward concerns about forest and range practices.	2 Members of the public satisfied that practices being used are lawful, being continuously improved, and ultimately sustainable.	• Proportion of participants provided an opportunity to comment on the fairness, objectivity and relevance of complaint investigations. • Proportion of complaint investigation recommendations monitored to assess implementation.
3. Provide the public with independent, objective analysis of forest and range practice issues of significant public importance.	3 Agencies and licensees address important practices issues affecting the sustainability for forest and range resources.	• Proportion of special investigation recommendations monitored to assess implementation. • Number of special investigations completed and published that deal with issues of major public importance.

Board Performance Plan Summary

Five Great Goals	Board Mission		
	The Board serves the public interest as the independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices in British Columbia.		
Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.	**Board Goals**	**Board Objectives**	**Performance Measures**
	1. Contribute to continuous improvement in forest and range practices.	1 Sustainable management of the full spectrum of resources identified in FRPA.	• Proportion of audit recommendations monitored to assess implementation. • Proportion of administrative penalties and appeals reviewed.
	2. Provide the public with a fair and effective means to bring forward concerns about forest and range practices.	2 Members of the public satisfied that practices being used are lawful, being continuously improved, and ultimately sustainable.	• Proportion of participants provided an opportunity to comment on the fairness, objectivity and relevance of complaint investigations. • Proportion of complaint investigation recommendations monitored to assess implementation.
	3. Provide the public with independent, objective analysis of forest and range practice issues of significant public importance.	3 Agencies and licensees address important practices issues affecting the sustainability for forest and range resources.	• Proportion of special investigation recommendations monitored to assess implementation. • Number of special investigations completed and published that deal with issues of major public importance.